

Schakowsky Slams Upton Bill

By John Eggerton

Cable & Broadcasting

January 27, 2005

Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) labeled the indecency-enforcement bill reintroduced by Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.) Wednesday as "overreaching" and pledged to defend the First Amendment from that effort.

She was the only House Commerce Committee member to vote against Upton's similar bill in the last Congress.

But broadcasters are warned against sending "thank you" notes just yet. Another complaint from Schakowsky is that the bill "fails to address the major concern of citizens across the country who believe that there is a direct correlation between media consolidation and the increasing number of objectionable materials on the air."

But maybe that is just a covert attempt to kill the bill. A provision added to last year's indecency bill trying looking to tie indecency to consolidation was one of the poison pills that helped kill it.

The new Upton bill would boost station and performer maximum indecency fines from \$32,500 and \$11,000, respectively, to \$500,000 per incident. It would also mandate a license renewal hearing for a third offense and require the FCC to act on complaints within 180 days.

2005, Broadcasting & Cable, Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier, Inc. All Rights Reserved.